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1. Welcome!

Happy New Year and thank you for your interest in the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC), which is part of the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District and the National Wildlife Refuge System, all managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. You are receiving our **second** electronic mailing for educators because you previously indicated an interest in the PWLC either directly or by visiting the PWLC with your class this past fall. We hope to keep in touch with you while saving paper, trees, time, and funds. We will no longer be sending postal mailings. This welcome bears repeating from our first edition because many of you are new to receiving this email newsletter.

If you know of other educators who may be interested in receiving this periodic mailing, we welcome you to forward this message to them or ask them to send an email to prairiewet@fws.gov with their name, school district, grade level(s), subjects, and city/state. Of course we also welcome your feedback anytime. If there is something in particular that you would like us to share, please let us know.

2. PWLC News and Events for Educators

- **New Winter Program for High Schools** - PWLC staff are now offering a new winter off-site classroom presentation for high school students on careers in wildlife management. This new program is part of an on-going curriculum revision which will include offering seasonal programs by grade level which will help support current MN graduation standards. Please call Office Assistant Terrie Eidal to book your presentation, 218-736-0938, ext. 10. If you would like a copy of the lesson plan emailed to you, please reply to this message.
- **Visit the PWLC during *RODENT WEEK***, January 30 – February 3, 2006. Learn about groundhogs and other animals that live in burrows. Experience life in a burrow...will you see your shadow? Students can also additional station includes a winter hike on the Mallard Marsh trail to look for signs of winter wildlife such as tracks, trails, vents, and tunnels. To schedule your two-hour winter field trip for your 2nd or 3rd graders, call Office Assistant Terrie Eidal at 218-736-0938, ext.10.
- **Workshops** - The PWLC has prepared an exciting line-up of professional development opportunities for educators in the first half of 2006 including: Project WET Workshop in February, Prairie Chicken Workshop in April, Project Learning Tree Fire Ecology Workshop in April, Project Learning Tree Early Elementary Workshop in June, and the Lessons in a Leopold Education Project Facilitator and Educator Workshops in June. Project Bluestem is tentatively scheduled for September. We hope you can participate in one or more of these workshops. Details are included elsewhere on the PWLC web site under Upcoming Programs, Programs and Workshops.
- **Envirothon** - The theme of the 2006 Canon Envirothon is Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate. The theme focuses on the role that water plays in our lives now and in the future, and includes such aspects as water quality, supply, use and allocation, conservation and management. Water is a key consideration in each of the four Envirothon disciplines - forestry, soils, wildlife and aquatics. In Minnesota, Area II's Envirothon will take place at the PWLC on Tuesday, May 2. For more information, visit <http://www.envirothon.org>.
- **Prairie Wetlands Readers** – The PWLC is working with 2nd and 3rd graders at Adams Elementary School in Fergus Falls to pilot an environmental literature project called

Prairie Wetlands Readers. Our goal is to train volunteers as Prairie Wetlands Readers and expand the program to other grades/schools. We will keep you posted on the development of this new project. *Thank you* Adams teachers for your help!

- **Prairie Science Class T-shirts Now Available!** Long-sleeved, youth and adult sizes and various colors are stocked for your purchase in the Bluestem Store here at the PWLC visitor center. The design “crawls” over your shoulder and continues on the back where the surprise awaits your discovery in classic PSC form -- a wonderful fashion statement for present and past Prairie Science Class students and friends.
- **Thank you to Steve Jatczak of NW-Links** who is working with us to determine the interest and potential participation of school districts in northwestern Minnesota to participate in distance education (electronic field trips) through Internet-based television. Thank you also to the participating superintendents and teachers who are providing their perspectives and input. We hope to have further details available for you soon regarding the direction this venture might take with multiple partners including Lakes Country Services Cooperative and the Prairie Science Class.
- **Thank you to our superb fall intern, Meredith McCool.** Meredith accepted a full-time, permanent position with the Bureau of Land Management in Anchorage, Alaska and left the PWLC in November. She is sorely missed by her co-workers and by the Prairie Science Class. We wish her the very best in her new position!
- **Thank you for YOUR support!** The PWLC hosted 10,098 student and adult environmental education visits in the last fiscal year and served the following communities: Alexandria, Barnesville, Brandon, Breckenridge, Detroit Lakes, Evansville, Fairmount, Fargo, Fergus Falls, Hawley, Miliona, Moorhead, Morris, Perham, Rothsay, Underwood, Wahpeton, Wheaton, and Greater Minnesota mixed groups. In addition, daily use by the Prairie Science Class totaled approximately 17,000 student and adult visits for the year (four classes of 25 students for 172 school days).
- **Minnesota Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program --** We would like to encourage you and your K-12th grade students to take advantage of this outstanding conservation-through-the-arts program. For more information or to obtain your copy of the Junior Duck Stamp Curriculum, visit <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/junior/junior.htm>. Minnesota teachers send student artwork by March 15, 2006 to: Mara Koenig, Minnesota Coordinator, Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program, Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, 3815 American Blvd. E., Bloomington, MN 55425. For questions, call: 952-858-0710 or E-mail: mara_koenig@fws.gov
- **Holiday Hours** – The PWLC visitor center will be closed on the following upcoming Federal holidays: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 16) and Presidents’ Day (February 20). The trails will still be open sunrise to sunset.

3. Other EE Resources and Events

Minnesota will be the host for the 2006 North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Conference!

The conference will be held in St. Paul on October 9-14, 2006. Mark the dates on your calendar.

First Hand Learning

First Hand Learning, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote learning from direct experience, inquiry-based teaching, and collaboration among formal and informal educational organizations. To learn more about First Hand Learning, Inc. and its projects, go directly to <http://www.firsthandlearning.org>. This web site contains many fabulous ideas you can use. of how weather can be described by measurable quantities, such as temperature, wind and precipitation. <http://www.ciese.org/curriculum/weatherproj/>

Climate Change and Prairie Potholes

Check out this eye-opening article on the relationship between climate change and prairie potholes. http://magazine.audubon.org/features0312/pots_of_gold.html

WildFinder

The World Wildlife Fund has created the WildFinder database, which allows users to find out where various species live around the world. The information in the database is based on the Fund's 825 ecoregions and currently includes information for four large taxa, or groups of species: birds, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians. The appeal of such a database extends to groups such as teachers, conservationists, and the general public. Visitors can search by country, U.S. Zip code, or city; search by species name; and also view a map gallery that contains some preselected themes, such as the richness of mammal species or reptiles species as distributed across the world. The database also includes images and information about threatened status. For more information go to: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildfinder/>

eBird

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society offer eBird, which provides a simple way for you to keep track of the birds you see anywhere in North America. Users can retrieve information on personal bird observations, access the entire historical database to find out what other eBirders are reporting from across North America, and more. Scientists can use the cumulative eBird database to know more about the distributions and movement patterns of birds across the continent. <http://www.ebird.org/content/>

Fundamentals of EE

This 10-week online course, running from February 6 to April 21, 2006, is appropriate for both classroom teachers and for non-formal educators. Developed by the Environmental Education and Training Partnership (EETAP) in collaboration with national EE experts, it provides educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to incorporate quality environmental education into their instruction. Participants may obtain three undergraduate or graduate credits from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point or take the course as a non-credit workshop. All students are eligible for the in-state tuition rate. Contact Angela Arkin at aarkin@uwsp.edu for a registration form. See www.eetap.org/html/online_ee_courses.php for details.

4. EE Grants and One Seriously Discounted Deal

Make a Splash!

Minnesota Project WET is looking for the 2006 site for the Make a Splash Water Festival. Email April.Rust@dnr.state.mn.us if you are interested in applying for your school or community. For more info, visit <http://www.projectwetusa.org/makeasplash>

Tips and Resources for Successful Grant Writing

Education World's "Show Me the Money: Tips & Resources for Successful Grant Writing" helps educators apply for classroom grants for class projects, field trips, special curriculum needs to enhance their students' educational experience. The website also includes links to additional resources. http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev039.shtml

Toyota Tapestry Grants

K-12 science teachers are eligible to apply for Toyota Tapestry Grants. The 2006 awards include 50 grants of up to \$10,000 each and 20 mini-grants of \$2,500 each. See www.toyota.com/about/community/education/tapestry.html for details. Deadline: January 19, 2006.

The Real Deal

The Aldo Leopold Foundation is offering copies of ***A Sand County Almanac*** for a special rate of \$3 per copy plus shipping for use in classrooms and other types of educational facilities. These copies are for bulk orders only and not marked for resale. For more information or to place an order, contact Teresa Searock at teresa@aldoleopold.org or go to <http://aldoleopold.org/WhatsNew/whatsnew.htm>.

5. Unsubscribe

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, send a message to prairiewet@fws.gov with "unsubscribe PWLC" in the subject line.

Happy Trails! From the PWLC Staff

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants for the continuing benefit of the American people.